DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 215 489 EC 142 148

AUTHOR Myers, Richard K.
TITLE Employer and Graduate Ratings of Competencies of First Year Special Education Teachers.
PUB DATE Dec 81
NOTE 57p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Competence; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Graduate Surveys; *Special Education Teachers; *Teacher Education; Teacher Evaluation; *Teaching Skills
IDENTIFIERS Noncategorical Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

Competencies of two groups of first year special education teachers were compared: 109 graduates whose training was primarily categorical and 99 graduates whose training was primarily noncategorical or comprehensive. Results of surveys on competencies completed by Ss and 27 Directors of Special Education in Pennsylvania intermediate units revealed that while the order of the rankings of competencies were similar for both groups of respondents, graduates ranked competencies related to legal mandates considerably lower and those related to teacher development somewhat higher than employers. No significant differences were found between categorically and noncategorically trained students. (Appended materials include survey forms and rating scales.) (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED215489

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Employer and Graduate Ratings of Competencies of First Year Special Education Teachers

Richard K. Myers, Professor
Department of Special Education
Slippery Rock State College
Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania 16057

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Richard K. Myers
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

December 1981

EC 142148

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Objectives 2

Method 2

Graduates 3

Employers 6

Data Analysis 6

Results 7

Employers 7

Graduates 12

Graduates and Employers 22

Conclusions 30

Appendices

A 33

B 42

C 49

D 51

References 53

List of Tables

1 Usable Responses From Special Education Graduates

2 Area of Emphasis or Major of the Respondents

3 Employment Status of Respondents Not Employed in Special Education

4 Five Competencies Demonstrated by Successful First Year Special Education Teachers With Highest Mean Ratings by Directors of Special Education

5 Ratings of Competencies Demonstrated by Successful First Year Teachers Related to Involvement in the Community as Perceived by Directors of Special Education

6 Mean Ratings of Clusters of Competencies Demonstrated by Successful First Year Teachers as Perceived by IU Directors of Special Education

7 Five Competencies With the Highest Mean Rating Which SRSC Graduates Believe They Can Demonstrate

8 Ratings of Competencies Involving the Community by SRSC Graduates

9 Mean Ratings of Competency Clusters for Graduates

10 The Effect of Year of Graduation on the Variability of the Graduates' Competency Ratings

11 Significant Relationships Between Year of Graduation and Major/Area of Interest on the Graduates' Competency Rating

12 Graduates' Perception of Their Ability to Demonstrate Competencies With Significant Relationships Between Year of Graduation and Major

13 Significant Relationships Between the Competency Ratings Provided by Employers and Graduates

14 Systematic Relationships Between Competency Ratings Made by Employers and Graduates

15 Significant Relationships Between the Competency Ratings Provided by Employers and Graduates by Year of Graduation

16 Systematic Relationship Between Competency Ratings Made by Employers and Graduates by the Year of Graduation of the Graduates

17 Significant Relationships Between the Competency Ratings Provided by Employers and Graduates by Major/Area of Emphasis

List of Tables (continued)

18 Systematic Relationship Between Competency Ratings Made by Employers and Graduates by the Major/Area of Emphasis of the Graduate

19 Significant Relationships Between the Competency Ratings Provided by Employers and Graduates by Year of Graduation and Major/Area of Interest

20 Systematic Relationships Between Competency Ratings of Employees and Graduates by the Graduates' Year of Graduation and Major

In 1974 the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) mandated that teacher certification programs to prepare teachers of handicapped children be transformed from categorical to noncategorical (comprehensive). Slippery Rock State College (SRSC) complied with the PDE mandate and designed a revised comprehensive certification program to prepare teachers to teach both mentally and physically handicapped (MPH) and regular elementary pupils. The comprehensive MPH certification program went into effect in September 1977.

During the 1975-76 academic year, a study was conducted by the SRSC Department of Special Education which was designed to elicit competency ratings from employers of special education teachers who had graduated from SRSC during the period May 1969 - August 1975. (Berner, Note 1) Information secured from this study was used by the faculty of the Department of Special Education in revising the undergraduate certification program from categorical to noncategorical (SRSC, Note 2).

Since the inception of the comprehensive certification program in September, 1977, 240 graduates have been produced by SRSC who purportedly should possess those competencies deemed desirable by the employers surveyed in 1975-76 and incorporated in the revised SRSC training program. Consequently, the present study was designed to determine the extent to which the competencies previously identified by employers as desirable for first year special education teachers and subsequently incorporated in the special education teacher certification program at SRSC, (a) continue

to be viewed as desirable by employers and (b) are possessed by our graduates. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to demonstrate that the SRSC program in special education is producing beginning teachers possessing competencies which are viewed as desirable by employers.

Objectives of the Study:

The specific questions to be answered by the study included:

1. What specific competencies do employers identify as descriptive of successful first year special education teachers?
2. What specific competencies do graduates of SRSC identify as descriptive of themselves as first year special education teachers?
3. Do graduates possess specific competencies that employers perceive as demonstrable by successful first year special education teachers?

Method

The subjects of this study consisted of the Directors of Special Education employed by the 29 Intermediate Units (IU) in Pennsylvania and the 240 individuals who graduated from SRSC in special education during the period December 1977 to August 1979. The graduates surveyed comprised two groups. Group One consisted of 129 individuals who graduated from SRSC in either December 1977 or May 1978. Although these students were exposed to the comprehensive (MPH) certification curriculum, their training essentially was categorical. Group Two consisted of 111 individuals who graduated in December 1978, May 1979, or August 1979. The Group Two graduates received the bulk of their training in the comprehensive (MPH) curriculum.

The survey instrument consisted of the "First Year Teacher

Competency Rating Scale"[1] which was modified from a scale employed in a previous study (Berner, Note 1). The modification primarily consisted of adding a section on "legal mandates" to reflect recent legislation effecting special education (See Appendix A). Both Directors and graduates were encouraged to add any competencies they thought are needed by first year special education teachers other than those listed on the survey instrument.

Graduates

The survey instrument was sent to individuals who graduated from SRSC in special education during the period from December 1977 to August 1979, inclusive (N=240). A total of two follow up contacts were made to non respondents to increase the number of respondents and improve the generalizability of the findings. The initial mailing date to Group One graduates was July 1, 1979. The final mailing was September 18, 1979. The initial mailing date to Group Two was October 3, 1979 with the third mailing on March 10, 1980. (See Appendix A) Consequently, all subjects invited to participate in the study had the opportunity to have had teaching experience ranging from a minimum of one month to a maximum of two years.

Of the 240 individuals who graduated from SRSC during the period from December 1977 to August 1979, a total of 208 (86.7%) responded. Since the survey was designed for individuals who were engaged in teaching exceptional children, only those survey instruments completed by graduates who were teaching special

[1]Information concerning the construction, validity, and reliability of the instrument is contained in the previous study.

education were tabulated. Consequently, the total number of respondents with usable survey instruments was 156 (65.0%). A visual inspection of the data failed to reveal any pattern related to either graduation date or area of emphasis of the respondents as compared to the total number of graduates. Consequently, it seemed reasonable to conclude that the respondents were representative of the total population of graduates to whom the survey instruments were sent on the two major variables. Table 1 summarizes the information on the subjects.

Table 1

Usable Responses From Special Education Graduates

Group	Total	Responded	Usable
Group One	129	109 (84.5%)	83 (64.3%)
Group Two	111	99 (89.2%)	73 (65.8%)
Total	240	208 (86.7%)	156 (65.0%)

Although the comprehensive MPH certification program developed by SRSC is noncategorical, the program is multi-categorical in that it is designed to permit students to select an emphasis area from one of three categorical areas: (MR) Mental Retardation, (PH/BI) Physically Handicapped/Brain Injured or (ED/LD) Emotionally Disturbed/Learning Disabled (SRSC, Note 2). The emphasis areas are consistent with the categorical majors included in the previous curriculum. Table 2 summarizes the respondents relative to their emphasis area/major.

Table 2

Area of Emphasis or Major of the Respondents

Group	Emphasis/Major			
	MR	PH/BI	ED/LD	Total
Group One	46 (29.5%)	16 (10.3%)	21 (13.5%)	83 (53.2%)
Group Two	37 (23.7%)	13 (8.3%)	23 (14.7%)	73 (46.8%)
Total	83 (53.2%)	29 (18.6%)	44 (28.2%)	156 (100%)

A total of 52 graduates (25% of respondents) who returned their survey instruments, were not teaching special education. Although these individuals did not meet the criterion for inclusion in the study, their employment status is reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Employment Status of

Respondents Not Employed in Special Education

(N=52)

Employment Category	Group One		Group Two		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Regular Education Teacher	5	09.6	10	19.2	15	28.8
Related Fields[a]	5	09.6	6	11.5	11	21.2
Graduate School	5	09.6	6	11.5	11	21.2
Non Related Fields	1	01.9	4	07.7	5	09.6
Unspecified	8	15.4	0	00.0	8	15.4
Unemployed	2	03.8	0	00.0	2	03.8
Total	26	50.0	26	50.0	52	100.0

[a]Includes such employment as teacher aide, house parent, Vista, behavior shaping specialist, etc.

Employers

In addition to the graduates, the Directors of Special Education in each of the twenty-nine intermediate units (IU) in Pennsylvania were contacted and asked to participate in the study. The initial mailing date to the Directors was July 1, 1979. (See Appendix B). Two additional contacts occurred with the last attempt to obtain a response dated September 19, 1979. Of the 29 individuals who were employed as IU Directors of Special Education in Pennsylvania, a total of 28 (97.6%) responded by returning the survey instruments. Of the 28 surveys returned, one could not be used due to the failure of the Director to provide the required data. A total of 27 (93.1%) Directors returned completed surveys which provided the usable data needed for the study. Although the survey instrument sent to the directors was identical to the one sent to the graduates, the directions were modified (See Appendix B).

Data Analysis

The respondents were asked to complete the survey instrument by filling in the appropriate answers on a computer scoring sheet. These scoring sheets were then forwarded to the SRSC Computer Center where the data was analyzed employing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, and Bent, 1975). This anlaysis provided information relative to:

1. The extent to which the specific competencies included on the survey instrument are viewed by employers as possessed by successful first year teachers.
2. The extent to which the specific competencies included on the survey instrument are viewed as possessed by SRSC graduates.
3. The extent to which the specific competencies included on the survey instrument are rated differently by graduates and employers.

Results

Employers

Directors of Special Education were asked to rate the competencies demonstrated by successful first year special education teachers employed by their intermediate unit (See Appendix B). The mean ratings derived from the respondents for each of the 35 competencies included on the survey instrument are reported in Appendix C. It is interesting to note that two of the top five rated competencies (C-6 and C-7) the Directors believe are demonstrated by successful first year teachers (See Table 4) are

Table 4

Five Competencies Demonstrated by Successful First Year Special Education Teachers With Highest Mean Ratings By Directors of Special Education

(N=27)

Rank	Competency[a]	$\bar{X}$ Rating	Competency Rating		
			Present	Uncertain	Not Present
1	Emotionally Stable (C-6)	1.296	96.3	3.7	0.0
2	Effective Team Member (C-32)	1.407	96.3	0.0	3.7
3	Implement IEP's (C-34)	1.407	92.6	3.7	3.7
4	Individualize Instruction (C-19)	1.407	92.6	0.0	7.4
5	Self Confidence (C-7)	1.444	96.3	3.7	0.0

[a]All competencies are abbreviated from longer versions included on the survey instrument.

categorized as teacher characteristics which probably are more related to the types of people who enter special education than to the specific training program from which they graduate. The other three competencies (C-32, C-34, and C-19) rated among the top five by the Directors appear to be more directly related to training and may be assumed to be the result of the training programs producing the successful first year teacher.

Table 5

Ratings of Competencies Demonstrated by Successful First Year Teachers Related to Involvement in the Community As Perceived by Directors of Special Education

(N=27)

Rank	Competency	$\bar{X}$ Rating	Competency Rating		
			Present	Uncertain	Not Present
30	Engender Community Support (C-21)	2.444	63.0	22.2	14.8
31	Utilize Community Resources (C-24)	2.444	59.3	25.9	14.8
32	Community Involvement (C-22)	2.444	51.9	33.3	14.8
33	Advocate for Pupils (C-25)	2.630	55.6	29.6	14.8
34	Consultant to Community (C-23)	2.963	37.0	29.6	33.3

The present results differ somewhat from a previous SRSC study of graduates. (Berner, Note 1) While the 1975 study also found teacher characteristics rated among the top five (C-6 and C-4), only one (C-6: "relate to pupils in a manner suggestive of emotional stability") is ranked among the top five in both studies. On the other hand, two of the top rated competencies in the present study

were not included in the previous study (C-32 and C-34), which predated P.L. 94-142. Perhaps, not surprisingly, three of the top rated competencies demonstrated by successful first year teachers in the present study are related to the teachers performance in areas directly related to or involved with the implementation of legal mandates arising from P.L. 94-142 (C-32, C-34, and C-19).

Four of the lowest rated competencies (and five of the lowest six) purported for successful first year teachers involve the community. The Directors apparently view successful first year special education teachers as less able to demonstrate competencies related to the utilization of and involvement in the community than competencies classified as non community. However, inspection of the data suggests that, with the exception of C-23 ("provide consultation services to community agencies") a majority of the Directors of special education view successful first year teachers as demonstrating competencies involving the community (See Table 5). It should be noted that the relative low ratings of these competencies by the Directors appear to be the result of the ratings of a minority (14.8 to 33.3%) of the Directors who rated the competencies not present in successful first year special education teachers. One possible explanation for the relative low ratings of the competencies related to the community may be the limited experience of first year teachers. It seems reasonable to assume that first year teachers probably are preoccupied with establishing themselves in new careers and have limited time to become involved in the community. If this hypothesis is correct, then community involvement and experience may be positively related. Another possible explanation for the relative low ratings of these

competencies may be that some Directors may view community involvement as less valuable/desirable competencies for first year teachers who they view as being successful.

Interestingly, only two of the low rated competencies involving the community (C-23 and C-24) were among the lowest rated competencies possessed by SRSC students who graduated between May 1969 and August 1975 (Berner, Note 1). One possible explanation for the difference in ratings between the two studies may be related to the legal mandates which resulted from the passage and implementation of PL 94-142. Since these mandates at times may create an adversary relationship between school and community personnel, some Directors may be less inclined to view competencies related to community involvement as desirable competencies to be demonstrated by those first year teachers they perceive as being successful. However, it should be noted that, with the exception of C-23, a majority of the Directors do view successful first year teachers as being able to demonstrate four of the five community competencies.

The one non-community involved competency among the bottom five is related to participation in research (C-29). This competency, which is ranked 34th in the present study, also ranked in the bottom five in the previous study (Berner, Note 1).

One final observation needs to be made. While the results of the present study differ from those of the previous SRSC study, the differences essentially are related to the relative degree to which the competencies are perceived by employers as being demonstrable by first year teachers. However, with the exception of one competency (C-23: "provide consultation services to community agencies") the competencies are viewed as demonstrable by successful first year teachers by a majority of the employers.

One additional method of assessing the extent to which the Directors view the competencies as demonstrable by first year teachers they consider successful, is presented in Table 6. Mean rating

Table 6

Mean Ratings of Clusters of Competencies Demonstrated by Successful First Year Teachers As Perceived by IU Directors of Special Education

(N=27)

Rank	Clusters	$\bar{X}$ Rating
1	Legal Mandates (C-31 to 35)	1.51
2	Teacher Characteristics (C-6 to 10)	1.52
3	Methodology (C-16 to 20)	1.57
4	Teacher Background (C-1 to 5)	1.72
5	Curriculum (C-11 to 15)	1.81
6	Teacher Development (C-26 to 30)	1.94
7	Community (C-21 to 25)	2.57

scores were obtained for each of the seven clusters of competencies listed on the survey instrument. The mean scores for all clusters, with the exception of Community, are in the strongly agree and agree categories. The mean rating score for the five competencies included in the community cluster fall between the agree and undecided categories. Interestingly, the ranking of the six clusters included in both the present and previous (Berner, Note 1) studies are identical. The cluster not included in the previous study (Legal Mandates) is ranked first in the present study and probably reflects the importance of these competencies to the Directors.

Only three of the 27 respondents (11.1%) who provided useable survey instruments added any comments relative to additional competencies needed by successful first year teachers of special education other than the ones listed on the survey instrument. Specific competencies suggested by one or more of the three Directors included the ability to:

-demonstrate an understanding of normal development,

-employ interpersonal relations strategies with regular educators,

-apply both formal and informal assessment techniques,

-demonstrate effective use of classroom aides,

-organize and conduct parenting programs, and

-demonstrate effective use of ancillary services.

While those competencies probably could be subsummed under one or more of the 35 competencies included on the survey instrument, their inclusion on the forms returned by the IU Directors attests to the importance placed on the competencies by the three respondents who took the time to add them to their surveys.

Graduates

Graduates of SRSC were asked to rate the competencies they believe they can demonstrate as first year special education teachers (See Appendix A). The mean ratings obtained from the responses to the survey instrument are listed in Appendix D. It is interesting to note that three (C-6, C-7 and C-8) of the top rated competencies (and five of the top eight) SRSC graduates believe they can demonstrate as first year teachers, are categorized as teacher characteristics which probably are related more to the type indivdiuals they are than to the training program they completed at SRSC (See Table 7). Of the two remaining top rated

Table 7

Five Competencies With the Highest Mean Rating Which SRSC Graduates Believe They Can Demonstrate

(N=156)

Rank	Competency[a]	$\bar{X}$ Rating	Competency Rating		
			Present	Uncertain	Not Present
1	Emotionally Stable (C-6)	1.353	98.1	1.9	0.0
2	Self Confidence (C-7)	1.378	95.5	3.9	0.6
3	Enthusiastic Role Model (C-8)	1.423	94.2	5.2	0.6
4	Prepare Written Reports (C-3)	1.458	95.5	2.6	1.9
5	Individualize Instruction (C-19)	1.468	94.2	5.2	0.6

[a]All competency are abbreviated from longer versions included on the survey instrument.

competencies, one, (C-3: "prepare written reports using standard English") is related more to the graduates' general education than to specific professional training. The remaining top rated competency (C-19: "individualize instruction for exceptional pupils") appears directly related to training in methodology.

Four of the five lowest rated competencies that graduates believe they can demonstrate involve the community (See Table 8). An inspection of the data presented in Table 8 suggests that while at least a plurality of the respondents (with the exception of C-21) believe they can demonstrate the competencies, a substantial proportion of the graduates either are undecided or believe they cannot demonstrate the competencies. The non-community competency among the bottom rated

Table 8

Ratings of Competencies Involving the Community

by SRSC Graduates

(N=156)

Rank	Competency		Competency Rating		
		$\bar{X}$ Rating	Present	Uncertain	Not Present
28	Advocate for Pupils (C-25)	2.147	64.7	28.0	7.3
32	Community Involvement (C-22)	2.473	54.0	33.8	12.2
33	Utilize Community Resources (C-24)	2.510	55.0	28.9	16.1
34	Engender Community Support (C-21)	2.678	40.3	42.3	17.4
35	Consultant to Community (C-23)	2.718	41.7	36.2	22.1

five is related to participation in research projects (C-29), which ranked 31st. One possible explanation for the relative low ratings graduates give to the competencies involving the community is their inexperience. It seems reasonable to assume that beginning teachers are deeply involved in their careers and have little time for or interest in community involvement. Community involvement takes time and may be viewed by the graduates as of less priority than activities more directly job related. Moreover, several of the competencies may be viewed by beginning untenured teachers either as potentially involving activities which could be job threatening (e.g. C-25), or as requiring more experience in order to effectively demonstrate (e.g. C-23).

The low rating given to C-29 ("participation in research projects") probably also is a reflection of the graduates' inexperience and priorities. In all likelihood graduates will view themselves as more confident to participate in research projects as they gain experience in special education.

The self ratings provided by the graduates also were assessed by obtaining and ranking mean ratings for each of the seven clusters of competencies. (See Table 9) An inspection of Table 9 supports the

Table 9

Mean Ratings of Competency Clusters For Graduates

(B=156)

Rank	Cluster	$\bar{X}$ Rating
1	Teacher Characteristics (C-6 to 10)	1.45
2	Methodology (C-16 to 20)	1.69
3	Teacher Background (C-1 to 5)	1.72
4	Legal Mandates (C-31 to 35)	1.81
5	Teacher Development (C-26 to 30)	1.85
6	Curriculum (C-11 to 15)	2.03
7	Community (C-21 to 25)	2.50

finding that competencies related to community involvement are viewed by first year teachers as less demonstrable than other competencies listed on the survey instrument. It is of some interest to note that the top ranked cluster (Teacher Characteristics) involves competencies which probably are more related to personal characteristics of the individuals themselves than to the SRSC training program. One interpretation of this finding is that

individuals who enter special education may already possess certain personal characteristics which contributed to their career choice.

A comparison of the competency cluster rankings of employers and graduates (Tables 6 and 9) suggests that while the order of the rankings are similar for both groups of respondents, graduates rate competencies related to legal mandates considerably lower (4th vs 1st) and competencies related to teacher development somwhat higher (5th vs 6th) than employers.

The graduates also were asked to suggest additional competencies they believe beginning special education teachers should possess. Seventeen (10.9%) of the respondents offered suggestions including the ability to:

-recognize the unique needs of exceptional children of poor rural families,

-work with exceptional children with communication disorders,

-conduct parent counseling,

-write IEP's,

-prepare lessons for use in cross categorical programs,

-work with children with visual perceptual problems,

-employ nonverbal communication techniques,

-recognize the number of people who are involved in scheduling with the resource room model,

-demonstrate procedures for lifting and changing ostomy bags,

-provide instruction for developing fine motor skills,

-employ techniques for increasing community involvement,

-identify the legal formalities related to obtaining children's services and placement procedure,

-implement basic first aid and health techniques with exceptional children,

-employ formal and informal assessment techniques including observational skills,

-interpret psychoeducational reports written by school psychologists, and

-assert self in advocating for exceptional children.

The majority of the competencies suggested by the graduates appear to be similar to or capable of being subsummed under one or more of the 35 competencies included in the survey instrument. Consequently, the respondents who took time to add these competencies either wanted to stress the importance of the competencies or did not believe the competencies were developed by the SRSC program.

Since the graduates consisted of two groups (Group One and Two) who experienced the comprehensive (MPH) to a greater or lesser degree, and who varied as to length of time since graduation, it is possible that the perceptions of the graduates relative to their ability to demonstrate the competencies could differ according to (a) graduation date, (b) area of emphasis, or (c) interaction between graduation date and area of interest.

Year of graduation: The significnce of the difference between the mean ratings for Group One and Group Two graduates for each of the 35 competencies included on the survey instrument was determined by means of t-tests. None of the differences was found to be significant (.05 level). The significance of the relationship between competency rating and year of graduation of the respondents also was evaluated by means of chi square. The results of this anlaysis are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

The Effect of Year of Graduation

On The Variability of the Graduates' Competency Ratings

(N=156)

Competency No.	Competency	X^2	df.	sig.
C-20	Use Behavior Modifications	7.674	3	.05
C-27	Achieve Professional Growth	9.377	3	.02

An inspection of the data suggests that while both Group One and Two graduates rate themselves as able to "apply behavior modification techniques in a humanistic manner" (86.8 and 85.3%, respectively), Group Two graduates rate themselves as possessing this competency with greater confidence than Group One graduates. (61.6% and 44.6%, respectively). Conversely, Group Two graduates rate themselves somewhat less sure of their ability to "identify experiences useful for achieving professional growth" (8.3% vs 0.0%). However, it should be noted that both Group One and Group Two respondents rate themselves as able to demonstrate this competency (96.2% and 91.7%, respectively). The greater confidence of Group Two graduates on C-20 probably is a reflection of the greater emphasis placed on behavioral principles and behavior modification techniques in the revised SRSC MPH certification program. The Group Two graduates' relative less confidence on C-27 probably is a reflection more of inexperience and lack of opportunity to identify experiences which will foster professional growth than changes in the curriculum they experienced as opposed to Group One.

It appears reasonable to conclude that since the two groups of graduates do not rate themselves significantly differently on any of the 35 competencies included on the survey instrument, the perceptions of the two groups relative to their ability to demonstrate the competencies is not influenced by the year of their graduation. However, year of graduation does seem to influence the degree of confidence graduates have in their ability to demonstrate the use of behavior modification and achieve professional growth.

Area of emphasis: Since the area of emphasis of the graduates could be related to the competency ratings provided by the graduates, chi square was applied to the data. The only significant (.02) relationship found was C-16: "employ diagnostic and prescriptive teaching strategies" ($X^2 = 15.633$, 6df). An inspection of the pattern of responses suggests that while a majority of all graduates believe they are able to demonstrate this competency, ED graduates rate themselves as possessing this competency to a greater extent than PH/BI graduates who rate themselves as possessing this competency to a greater extent than MR graduates (93.1%, 89.7% and 73.5%, respectively). One possible explanation for the relative high ratings provided by ED graduates is that a course in educational assessment, now required for all students who complete the comprehensive program, was required only for ED students in the categorical program. The assessment course was a suggested elective for PH/BI students and merely listed as one of several possible electives for MR students. It seems reasonable to conclude that, with the exception of the one competency, no significant relationship exists between the graduates' area of emphasis and ratings of the competencies.

Year of graduation by area of emphasis: The significance of the difference of mean ratings between Group One and Group Two graduates for each of the three areas of interest (ED, PH/BI, and MR) was determined employing t-tests. The only significant difference found was between Group One and Group Two ED students (t value = 2.28, 38 df, sig. = 0.03) for C-29 ("participate in research projects"). An inspection of the mean ratings for the two ED groups suggests that Group One graduates rate themselves able to demonstrate this competency with greater confidence than Group Two graduates. The significance of the relationship between year of graduation and area of emphasis of the graduates also was determined using chi square. The results of this evaluation are presented in Tables 11 and 12. An inspection of the ratings of the graduates on the four competencies suggests that Group One graduates perceive of themselves as being able to demonstrate the competencies with greater confidence than Group Two graduates. However, it should be noted that a majority of both MR Group One and Group Two graduates perceive of themselves as able to demonstrate two of the three competencies, (C-10: "inspire exceptional pupils to realize

Table 11

Significant Relationships Between Year Of Graduation and Major/Area of Interest on the Graduates' Competency Ratings

(N=156)

Major	Competency	X^2	df	sig.
MR	Inspire Pupils (C-10)	9.231	3	.03
MR	Use Behavior Modification (C-20)	8.645	3	.03
MR	Utilize Community Resources (C-24)	10.748	4	.03
ED	Participate in Research (C-29)	8.114	3	.04

their capabilities and C-20: "apply behavior modification techniques in a humanistic manner"). On the other hand, a majority of Group Two MR and ED graduates rate themselves on two competencies (C-24: "plan for the effective utilization of community resources" and

Table 12

Graduates' Perception of Their Ability To Demonstrate Competencies With Significant Relationships Between Year of Graduation and Major

(N=156)

			Competency Ratings[a]		
Competency	Group	Major	Present	Uncertain	Not Present
C-10	1	MR	93.2	4.5	2.3
	2	MR	72.9	27.0	0.0
C-20	1	MR	82.6	8.7	8.7
	2	MR	81.1	18.9	0.0
C-24	1	MR	55.6	24.4	20.0
	2	MR	43.2	43.2	13.5
C-29	1	ED	64.7	35.3	0.0
	2	ED	47.8	34.8	17.4

[a]Present consists of ratings strongly agree and agree while not present consists of ratings of disagree and strongly disagree.

C-29: "participate in research projects"), as either uncertain of their ability to demonstrate the competency or unable to demonstrate the presence of the competency (56.7% and 52.2%, respectively). The relatively low ratings of these four competencies by Group Two graduates may be a reflection of their inexperience and lack of confidence. However, the hypothesezed positive relationship between confidence in demonstrating the competencies and experience does not explain why the relationship does not hold for all three major/area of interest

groups.

It seems reasonable to conclude that with the exception of the one competency which relates to participation in research projects, there are no significant differences between the ratings provided by the graduates which are attributable to an interaction between year of graduation and major/area of interest of the respondents. While a significant variability of ratings was found for four of the 35 competencies, no clear cut conclusions relative to caused factors are possible which will explain the interaction effect noted.

Graduates and Employers

Since one of the objectives of the study was to determine if SRSC graduates perceive of themselves as possessing competencies that employers view as demonstrated by successful first year special education teachers, the data was analyzed to determine if a relationship exists between the ratings provided by the graduate and the employers. The results of this assessment are reported in Table 13 and 14.

Of the 35 competencies included on the survey instrument, significant relationships exist for only six of the competencies. An inspection of the data in Table 14 indicates that while the majority of both employers and graduates rate the six competencies as demonstrable, the pattern of the responses varies. Graduates view their ability to demonstrate C-9: "empathize with exceptional pupils", C-19: "individualize instruction for exceptional pupils", C-25: "serve as an advocate for exceptional persons with the community", and C-28: "implement new procedures on an experimental basis" with greater confidence than employers believe these competencies are demonstrated by successful first year teachers. On the other hand,

Table 13

Significant Relationships Between The Competency Ratings Provided by Employers and Graduates

(N=183)

Number	Competency	X^2	df	Sig.
2	Compare Exceptional Children	9.631	4	.05
9	Empathetic	9.285	3	.03
19	Individualize Instruction	10.307	3	.02
25	Advocate for Pupils	10.364	4	.03
27	Achieve Professional Growth	9.879	3	.02
28	Experiment	9.079	3	.03

Table 14

Systematic Relationships Between Competency Ratings Made by Employers and Graduates

(N=183)

		Competency Ratings		
Competency	Respondents	Present	Uncertain	Not Present
C-2	Employers	92.3	0.0	7.7
	Graduates	90.3	5.2	4.5
C-9	Employers	84.6	11.5	3.8
	Graduates	92.9	5.2	1.9
C-19	Employers	92.6	0.0	7.4
	Graduates	94.1	5.2	0.6
C-25	Employers	55.6	29.6	14.8
	Graduates	64.6	28.0	7.3
C-27	Employers	100.0	0.0	0.0
	Graduates	94.0	4.0	2.0
C-28	Employers	77.8	18.5	3.7
	Graduates	86.8	11.3	2.0

employers view C-2: "compare exceptional with normal pupils" and C-27: "identify experiences useful for achieving professional growth" as demonstrable by successful first year teachers to a greater extent than graduates perceive of themselves as able to demonstrate.

Based upon the results obtained, it appears reasonable to conclude that for the majority of the competencies included on the survey instrument, employers and graduates tend to rate the competencies in much the same way. Moreover, where a systematic relationship was found, differences between the ratings provided by employers and graduates seem to be related more to the degree to which the competencies are perceived to be demonstrable than to the presence or absence of the competencies.

Year of graduation: The ratings provided by the respondents were evaluated further to determine if the year of graduation of the graduates influenced the relationship between the ratings provided by employers and graduates. The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 15 and 16.

Table 15

Significant Relationships Between the Competency Ratings Provided by Employers and Graduates By Year of Graduation

(N=183)

Number	Competency	X^2	df	Sig.
C-19	Individualize Instruction	13.996	6	.03
C-25	Advocate for Pupils	16.309	8	.04
C-27	Achieve Professional Growth	20.915	6	.002

Table 16

Systematic Relationship Between Competency Ratings Made By Employers and Graduates By the Year of Graduation of the Graduates

(N=183)

Competency	Respondent	Competency Ratings		
		Present	Uncertain	Not Present
C-19	Employers	92.6	0.0	7.4
	Graduates - One	97.5	2.5	0.0
	Graduates - Two	90.4	8.2	1.4
C-25	Employers	55.6	29.6	14.8
	Graduates - One	59.0	34.6	6.4
	Graduates - Two	70.8	20.8	8.4
C-27	Employers	100.0	0.0	0.0
	Graduates - One	92.2	0.0	3.8
	Graduates - Two	91.7	8.3	0.0

A significant systematic relationship between employers and graduates by year of graduation exists for only three of the 35 competencies measured. An inspection of Table 16 fails to identify any consistent relationship in the pattern of responses for the three competencies. However, it should be noted that a majority of employers and a majority of both groups of graduates indicate that these competencies are perceived as being present. One possible contributing factor may be the experience of the respondents. Group Two graduates rate themselves less able than Group One graduates to demonstrate two of the competencies (C-19 and C-27) which reasonably may be expected to increase with experience. On the other hand, they rate themselves more able than Group One to

demonstrate C-25 ("serve as an advocate for exceptional persons with the community") which may be a reflection of their idealism untempered by experience.

Based upon the results obtained, it appears reasonable to conclude that for the majority of the competencies, employers and graduates tend to rate the competencies included in the survey in much the same way regardless of the graduate's year of graduation.

Area of emphasis: The relationship between the ratings of employers and graduates by their area of emphasis obtained on the survey also was evaluated. Significant systematic relationships were found on four competencies (See Table 17).

Table 17

Significant Relationships Between the Competency Ratings Provided by Employers and Graduates By Major/Area of Emphasis

(N=183)

Number	Competency	X^2	df	Sig.
C-16	Diagnosis and Prescribe	22.783	9	.01
C-19	Individualize Instruction	20.315	9	.02
C-25	Advocate for Pupils	22.103	12	.04
C-27	Achieve Professional Growth	21.722	9	.01

An inspection of the patterns of the ratings (See Table 18) fails to discern a consistent pattern applicable to the four competencies other than the obvious one that the majority of the respondents rate their ability to demonstrate these competencies as being present.

Table 18

Systematic Relationship Between Competency Ratings Made by Employers and Graduates By The Major/Area of Emphasis of the Graduate

(N=183)

Competency	Respondent	Competency Ratings		
		Present	Uncertain	Not Present
C-16	Employers	92.6	0.0	7.4
	MR	73.5	18.1	8.4
	PH/BI	89.7	3.4	6.9
	ED/LD	93.1	6.8	0.0
C-19	Employers	92.6	0.0	7.4
	MR	91.4	7.4	1.2
	PH/BI	100.00	0.0	0.0
	ED/LD	95.4	4.5	0.0
C-25	Employers	55.6	29.6	14.8
	MR	67.1	28.0	4.8
	PH/BI	64.3	21.4	14.3
	ED/LD	60.0	32.5	7.5
C-27	Employers	100.00	0.0	0.0
	MR	95.1	2.4	2.4
	PH/BI	100.00	0.0	0.0
	ED/LD	87.5	10.0	2.5

Both ED/LD and PH/BI graduates rate themselves as able to diagnose and prescribe (C-16) and individualize instruction (C-19) with greater confidence than MR graduates. However, MR graduates rate themselves as better able to be an advocate (C-25) than either PH/BI or ED/LD graduates, and PH/BI graduates rate their ability to achieve professional growth (C-27) higher than MR or ED/LD graduates. The ratings provided by the employers tend to be

consistent with those of ED/LD graduates on two competencies (C-16 and C-25), MR graduates on one competency (C-19), and PH/BI graduates on one competency (C-27). Conversely, employers' ratings tend to be at a greater variance with MR graduates on two competencies (C-16 and C-25) and PH/BI and ED/LD graduates on one competency each (C-19 and C-27, respectively).

It seems reasonable to conclude that for the majority of the competencies, no systematic relationship exists between the ratings provided by the employers and graduates by their area of interest. The respondents tend to rate the competencies in much the same way with the exception of four competencies for which no consistent response pattern is discernable.

Year of graduation by major: One final assessment was made. The responses were assessed to determine if a systematic relationship exists between the ratings provided by the employers and graduates by the graduates' year of graduation and major. The results of this assessment are summarized in Tables 19 and 20.

Table 19

Significant Relationships Between the Competency Ratings Provided by Employers and Graduates by Year of Graduation and Major/Area of Interest

(N=183)

Number	Group	Competency	X^2	df	Sig.
16	One	Diagnosis and Prescribe	17.418	9	.04
27	One	Achieve Professional Growth	15.380	6	.02
29	One	Participate in Research	26.037	12	.01
9	Two	Empathetic	16.987	9	.05
27	Two	Achieve Professional Growth	15.549	6	.02

Table 20

Systematic Relationships Between Competency Ratings of Employees and Graduates by the Graduates' Year of Graduation and Major (N=183)

Competency	Respondents	Group	Competency Ratings		
			Present	Uncertain	Not Present
C-16	Employer		92.6	0.0	7.4
	MR	One	69.6	17.4	13.0
	PH/BI	One	87.5	0.0	12.5
	ED/LD	One	95.2	4.8	0.0
C-27	Employer		100.0	0.0	0.0
	MR	One	95.6	0.0	4.4
	PH/BI	One	100.0	0.0	0.0
	ED/LD	One	94.1	0.0	5.9
C-29	Employer		48.1	37.0	14.8
	MR	One	51.1	33.3	15.5
	PH/BI	One	81.2	12.5	6.3
	ED/LD	One	64.7	35.3	0.0
C-9	Employer		84.6	11.5	3.8
	MR	Two	97.3	2.7	0.0
	PH/BI	Two	100.0	0.0	0.0
	ED/LD	Two	91.3	8.7	0.0
C-27	Employer		100.0	0.0	0.0
	MR	Two	94.5	5.4	0.0
	PH/BI	Two	100.0	0.0	0.0
	ED/LD	Two	82.6	17.4	0.0

A significant relationship exists for only five of the 35 competencies included on the survey instrument. An inspection of the patterns of the responses summarized in Table 20 fails to discern any single probable explanation for the systematic relationships found. However, several interpretations are possible. The pattern of

responses for C-27 ("identify experiences useful for achieving professional growth"), while similar for both Group One and Group Two, indicates that Group Two ED/LD graduates perceive their ability to demonstrate the competency with less confidence than either Group One ED/LD graduates or Directors. Although limited experience might be a reasonable explanation, the failure to discern a similar pattern for MR and PH/BI graduates suggests the need for an alternate hypotheses. An alternate explanation may be that the comprehensive curriculum may contain less emphasis or activites related to this competency for students with an ED/LD area of emphasis than for students with MR or PH/BI areas of emphasis.

It is interesting to note that a systematic relationship among the ratings exists for only two competencies (C-9 and C-27) for employers and Group Two graduates and for only three competencies (C-16, C-27 and C-29) for employers and Group One graduates. Consequently, it appears reasonable to conclude that for a majority of the competencies, Directors and graduates tend to rate the competencies in much the same way regardless of the graduates' year of graduation or area of emphasis. This finding suggests that graduates tend to rate themselves as able to demonstrate competencies which Directors view as demonstrable by individuals they view as successful first year special education teachers.

Conclusions

The results obtained from this study provide information which can be used to answer the three questions posed by this study.

What specific competencies do employers identify as descriptive of successful first year special education teachers?

1. Directors of Special Education rate the competencies purported to be possessed by SRSC graduates as demonstrable by teachers they view as successful first year special education teachers.
2. Directors rate competencies related to legal mandates as among those most likely to be demonstrated by successful first year special education teachers.
3. Directors rate competencies related to community involvement as among those least likely to be demonstrated by successful first year special education teachers.
4. The competencies purported to be possessed by graduates of SRSC as a result of the MPH curriculum, appear to remain valid in that they continue to be viewed by employers as demonstrable by individuals they view as successful first year special education teachers.

What specific competencies do graduates of SRSC identify as descriptive of themselves as first year special education teachers?

1. Graduates rate themselves as able to demonstrate the majority of the competencies purported to be developed as a result of the completion of the SRSC MPH Certification Program.
2. Graduates tend to view themselves as able to demonstrate competencies related to personal characteristics to a greater extent than competencies related to their training program at SRSC.
3. Graduates tend to be less confident of their ability to demonstrate competencies related to community involvement and research than to the other competencies.
4. The year of graduation, area of emphasis within special education, or interaction between year of graduation and area of emphasis do not effect the way the graduates rate their ability to demonstrate the competencies.

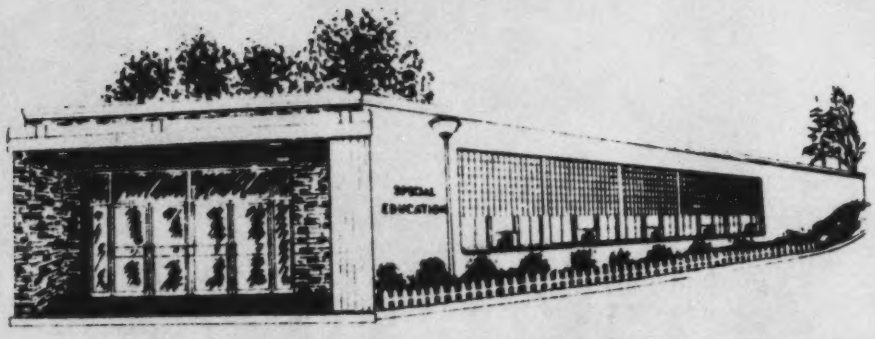
Do graduates possess specific competencies that employers perceive as demonstrable by successful first year special education teachers?

1. Graduates and Directors tend to rate a majority of the competencies in much the same way. Moreover, the differences that do exist tend to be related more to the degree to which the competencies are rated as demonstrable than to the absence or presence of the competencies.
2. The year of graduation and area of emphasis within special education of the graduates does not effect the way the graduates and Directors rated the majority of the competencies.
3. Graduates tend to view themselves as able to demonstrate those competencies which employers view as demonstrable by those first year teachers of special education which they view as successful.

Appendix A

SLIPPERY
ROCK
STATE
COLLEGE

Slippery Rock,
Pennsylvania 16057



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
(412) 794-7344 • (412) 794-7308

July 1, 1979

Ms.

Dear Ms.

I would appreciate your help. Teacher training increasingly is being viewed as irrelevant for preparing teachers who possess the competencies needed to teach in today's schools. If a teacher is successful, the implication is that he/she either (1) is successful irregardless of the preservice training received due to personal characteristics or (2) is successful because of experiences and training received subsequent to employment.

Several years ago, as a result of a series of interviews with special educators in Western Pennsylvania, a number of competencies were identified which were purported to be desirable competencies for first year special education teachers. Unfortunately, these competencies predated the implementation of PL 94-142 and the development of the noncategorical MPH Certificate for special education by SRSC as mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

I am interested in determining the extent to which these competencies remain viable in light of the changing attitudes toward teacher training and changing practices in special education resulting from PL 94-142 and the MPH Certification.

I am enclosing (1) a survey instrument entitled the First Year Teacher Competency Rating Scale which consists of a modified list of competencies, (2) a computerized answer sheet, and (3) an addressed, postage paid envelope. I hope you will complete the survey and return it to me by July 23, 1979.

Thank you for your assistance. Your response will assist me assess our current MPH Certification training program and modify it as needed to insure that the competencies you deem desirable are developed by our graduates.

Sincerely,

Richard K. Myers, Ed.D.
Professor of Special Education

RKM/ms
Enclosures

P.S.: Ms. , if you would rather not assist me in this matter, please so indicate on the survey, sign your name and return it to me immediately. By doing so, I will know of your decision and will not follow up this mailing.

First Year Teacher Competency Rating Scale

This scale has been prepared so that you can rate the competencies you believe you can demonstrate as a first year special education teacher from Slippery Rock State College. Please fill in the appropriate circle on the enclosed Computer Scoring Sheet indicating how you rate the presence of each teacher competency (A - strongly agree, B - agree, C - undecided, D - disagree, E - strongly disagree). Any comments and/or suggestions relative to competencies you believe you needed as a first year teacher other than those listed on this scale are welcome and should be placed on an additional sheet and attached to the answer sheet.

AS A TYPICAL FIRST YEAR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER FROM SLIPPERY ROCK STATE COLLEGE, I AM ABLE TO:

GENERAL TEACHER BACKGROUND

1. recognize characteristics of all exceptionalities
2. compare exceptional with normal pupils
3. prepare written reports using standard English
4. use techniques which facilitate effective communications
5. solve problems in an effective manner

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

6. relate to pupils in a manner suggestive of emotional stability
7. display self-confidence in working with pupils
8. model enthusiasm which motivates exceptional pupils to learn
9. empathize with exceptional pupils
10. inspire exceptional pupils to realize their capabilities

CURRICULUM

11. implement mandated curriculum requirements
12. use evaluative criteria for selecting educational materials
13. organise restoration activities for exceptional pupils
14. use community resources for enriching the curriculum
15. derive curricular content which meets the needs of exceptional pupils

---

METHODOLOGY

16. employ diagnostic and prescriptive teaching strategies
17. apply techniques to successfully manage a classroom of exceptional pupils
18. demonstrate the effective use of instructional resources
19. individualize instruction for exceptional pupils
20. apply behavior modification techniques in a humanistic manner

COMMUNITY

21. engender community support for programs in special education
22. enhance the work of the school by being involved with the community
23. provide consultation services to community agencies
24. plan for the effective utilization of community resources
25. serve as an advocate for exceptional persons with the community

---

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

26. participate in activities which promote professional development
27. identify experiences useful for achieving professional growth
28. implement new procedures on an experimental basis
29. participate in research projects
30. resourcefully apply new concepts of teaching

LEGAL MANDATES

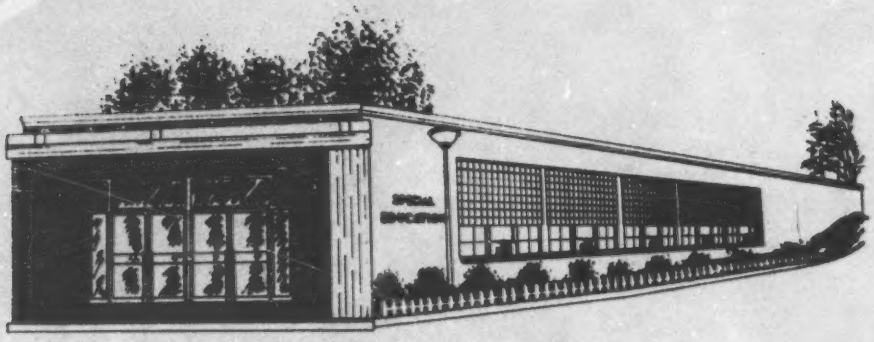
31. develop strategies which facilitate parent cooperation
32. contribute to effective team operation
33. write IEP's which meet all legal requirements
34. implement IEP's for all exceptional pupils
35. employ techniques which foster effective mainstreaming of exceptional pupils

_____
Signature

_____
Address

SLIPPERY
ROCK
STATE
COLLEGE

Slippery Rock,
Pennsylvania 16057



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
(412) 794-7344 • (412) 794-7308

August 2, 1979

Ms.

Dear Ms.

I still need your help. Approximately one month ago I sent you a survey instrument entitled "First Year Teacher Competency Rating Scale". The instrument was designed to obtain input from experienced special education graduates of SRSC. It is important for us to know the extent to which the competencies listed on the scale remain viable re the changing attitudes toward teacher training and changing practices in special education resulting from PL 94-142 and the new MPH Certification in Pennsylvania. To date I have not received your completed rating scale.

In the event you did not receive my initial letter or misplaced it, I am enclosing a copy of the scale, and an addressed and postage paid envelope for your convenience. I hope you will complete and return the survey to me within the next two weeks.

While I realize summer is a busy time of the year, I hope you will take the few minutes needed to complete the brief survey and return it to me. Your responses are important to me and will assist me assess and modify our teacher training program to insure the competencies you deem important are developed by our graduates. Thank you for your assistance and continued support.

Sincerely,

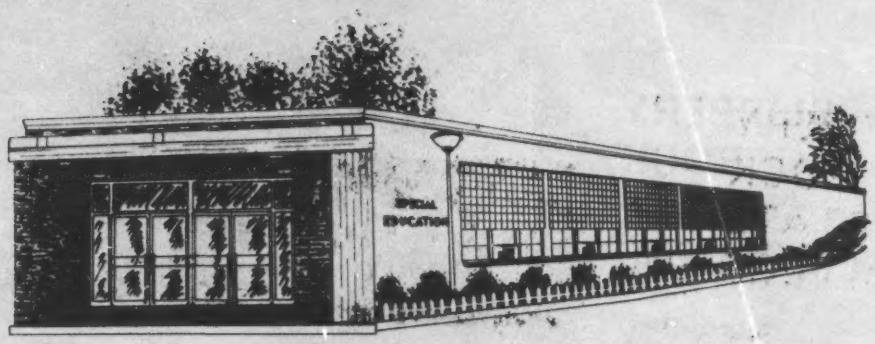
Richard K. Myers, Ed.D.
Professor of Special Education

RKM/ms
Enclosures

P.S.: Ms. as stated in my previous letter, if you would rather not help me in this matter, please so indicate on this letter and return it to me. If you are not employed as a special education teacher, merely so indicate on the letter and return it in the enclosed envelope. By doing so, I will know of your decision or employment status and will not follow up this letter. If you have already completed the survey and mailed it to me, please disregard this letter. Several surveys were returned unsigned.

SLIPPERY
ROCK
STATE
COLLEGE

Slippery Rock,
Pennsylvania 16057



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
(412) 794-7344 • (412) 794-7308

September 10, 1979

Dear

I am writing to you one more time in the hope that you will complete the enclosed "First Year Teacher Competency Rating Scale". I have received responses for all but about 30 of the students to whom the survey was sent. Your response is urgently requested and sincerely needed.

The scale was designed to obtain input from experienced special education graduates of SRSC. It is important for us to know the extent to which the competencies listed on the scale remain important today.

In the event you did not receive my earlier letters or misplaced them, I am enclosing a copy of the rating scale, and an addressed and postage paid envelope for your convenience. I hope you will complete and return the survey to me by Monday, October 1st.

If you are not now teaching special education, please so indicate on this letter and return it in the enclosed envelope. This information will help us in interpreting the results of the survey. Thank you for your assistance and continued support.

Sincerely,

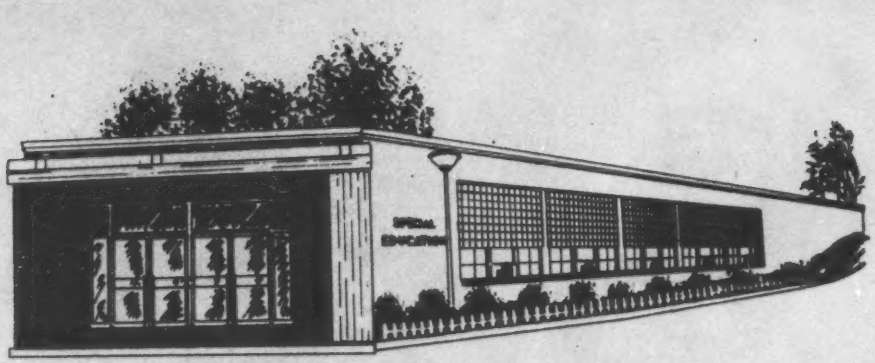
Richard K Myers

Richard K. Myers, Ed.D.
Professor of Special Education

RKM/bsp
enclosures

SLIPPERY
ROCK
STATE
COLLEGE

Slippery Rock,
Pennsylvania 16057



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
(412) 794-7344 • (412) 794-7308

Dear Special Education Graduate:

Once again, please accept my sincere congratulations on your graduation. All of us in the Department of Special Education are proud of you and your accomplishments.

As you probably know, our department applies for a grant from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH), United States Office of Education (USOE) each year. BEH requires us to conduct a survey of every member of your graduating class (December, 1978, May and August, 1979). We must determine exactly what each of you is doing after studying in the area of Special Education.

I have enclosed a survey which will take you ten-to-fifteen minutes to complete. The results of this survey will be sent to BEH, and will also help us recruit new students and improve our program. It is essential that we get the requested information from you within five days after you receive the questionnaire. If we do not receive the questionnaire, we will need to try to contact you by telephone since we must obtain the requested information. Because telephoning is both time consuming and expensive, we hope you will complete the surveys and return them to us in the specified time.

I have also enclosed information on our Graduate Program which you may be interested in reading. We hope that you will consider SRSC if you plan on continuing your education towards a Master's Degree.

Thank you for your assistance and continued support.

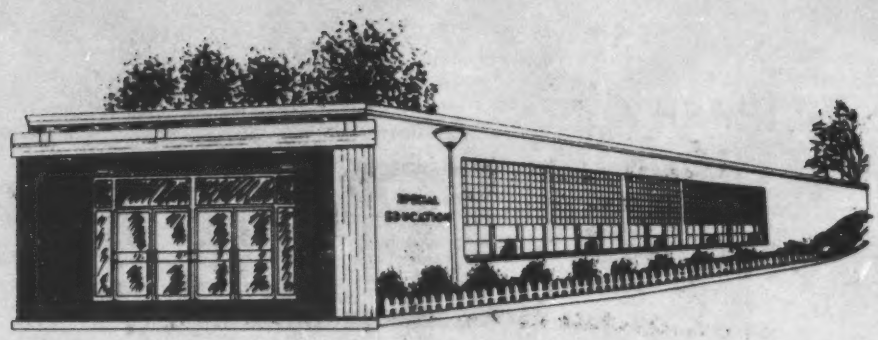
Warm personal regards,

Dennis T. Fair, Ph.D.
Professor and Chairman

DTF/rh
enclosure

SLIPPERY
ROCK
STATE
COLLEGE

Slippery Rock,
Pennsylvania 16057



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
(412) 794-7344 • (412) 794-7308

November 29, 1979

Dear Special Education Graduate:

As you probably know, during the beginning of October I mailed the enclosed questionnaire to you and all of the other people who graduated from our department during December, 1978 and May and August, 1979. You are one of the people who did not complete and mail in the questionnaire. As I said in my original letter, the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH) requires us to survey every member of our graduating class to determine what each person is doing after studying in the area of special education.

The survey which is enclosed will only take you 10-15 minutes to complete, and the results will be most beneficial to our department. We will be able to recruit more students by sharing the results of this survey. We will be able to fulfill our commitment to BEH and possibly obtain more federal grant monies to improve our program.

The budget under which our department operates has been reduced by 40% this year. This is also the case with the other departments at SRSC. One of the most critical cuts is concerned with paper. The paper that was consumed by our first survey was considerable, and this second mailing is going out to 68 graduates. Please take the time to complete this form and mail it to me within five days after you receive it. We are happy to support you with references, etc., for jobs, but we really need your assistance in this instance.

Very truly yours,

Dennis T. Fair

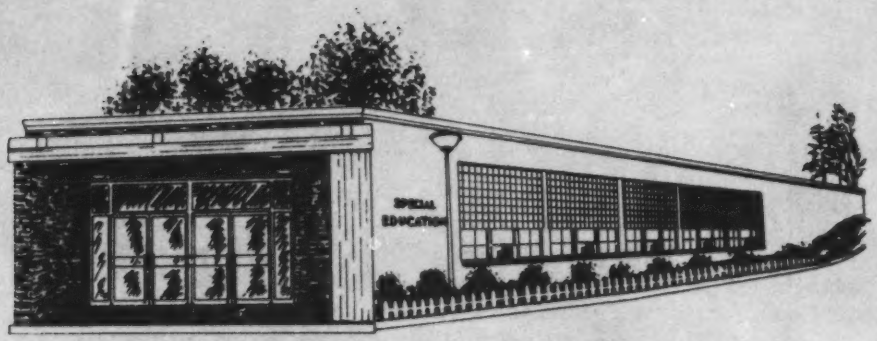
Dennis T. Fair, Ph.D.
Professor and Chairman

DTF/rh
enclosure

Appendix B

SLIPPERY
ROCK
STATE
COLLEGE

Slippery Rock,
Pennsylvania 16057



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
(412) 794-7344 • (412) 794-7308

July 1, 1979

Dear

I would appreciate your help. Teacher training increasingly is being characterized as possessing little if any relevancy for preparing teachers and/or supervisory personnel who are competent to deal effectively with the problems encountered in many schools today. If these school personnel are successful, the implication is that they either (1) are successful irregardless of the preservice training received due to personal characteristics or (2) are successful because of training and experiences subsequent to employment, e.g. inservice education, staff meetings, administrative support, etc.

Several years ago, as a result of a series of interviews with special educators in Western Pennsylvania; a number of competencies were identified which were purported to be desirable competencies for first year special education teachers. A similar process resulted in competencies purported to be desirable for first year supervisors of special education. Both sets of competencies predated the implementation of PL 94-142 and the development of the non-categorical MPH Certificate for Special Education teachers in Pennsylvania.

I am interested in determining the extent to which these competencies remain viable in light of the changing attitudes toward teacher training and changing practices in special education as a result of PL 94-142 and MPH Certification.

I am enclosing two (2) <u>brief</u> survey instruments which I hope you will complete and return to me. The First Year Teacher Competency Rating Scale and First Year Supervisor Competency Rating Scale consist of a modified list of the competencies previously identified. While not all inclusive, these competencies are among those which our approved MPH and Supervisory Certification programs purport to develop in individuals who successfully complete these programs.

Although I know this is a busy time of the year for you, I hope you will take the few minutes needed to complete the two (2) brief survey instruments and return them to me by July 23, 1979. I have included addressed and postage paid envelopes for your convenience. Your responses will assist me assess our MPH and Supervision Certification Programs and proposed modifications as needed to insure that the competencies you deem desirable are developed by our graduates.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

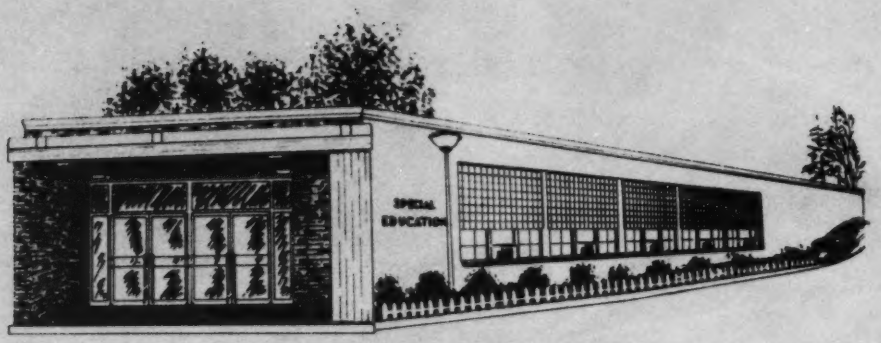
Richard K. Myers, Ed.D.
Professor of Special Education

RKM/bsp
enclosures

P.S.: _____, if you would rather not assist me in this matter, please so indicate on the survey(s), sign your name and return to me immediately. By doing so, I will know of your decision and will not follow-up this mailing.

SLIPPERY
ROCK
STATE
COLLEGE

Slippery Rock,
Pennsylvania 16057



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
(412) 794-7344 • (412) 794-7308

August

Dear

Approximately one month ago I sent you two (2) brief survey instruments entitled the "First Year Teacher Competency Rating Scale" and the "First Year Supervisor Competency Rating Scale". Both scales were designed to obtain input from knowledgeable practitioners in special education, such as you. It is important for me to know the extent to which the competencies listed on the instruments remain viable in light of the changing attitudes toward teacher training and changing practices in special education. To date I have not received the completed rating instruments.

In the event you did not receive my initial letter or misplaced it, I am enclosing copies of the two (2) brief survey instruments which I hope you will complete and return to me within the next two weeks.

Although I realize summer is a busy time of the year for you, I hope you will take the few minutes needed to complete the two (2) brief rating instruments. I have included an addressed and postage paid envelope for your convenience. Your responses are important to me and will assist me assess our Certification Programs and propose needed modifications to insure the competencies you deemed important are developed by our graduates. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard K. Myers, Ed.D.
Professor of Special Education

PS: _____as stated in my previous letter, if you would rather not assist me in this matter, please so indicate on the bottom of this letter and return to me immediately. By so doing, I will know of your decision and will not follow up this mailing.

First Year Teacher Competency Rating Scale

This scale has been prepared so that you can rate the competencies demonstrated by successful first year special education teachers employed by your intermediate unit. Please circle the letter on the left indicating how you rate the presence of each teacher competency (SA - strongly-agree, A - agree, U - undecided, D - disagree, SD - strongly disagree).

THE TYPICAL SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER IS ABLE TO:

GENERAL TEACHER BACKGROUND

SA A U D SD 1. recognize characteristics of all exceptionalities

SA A U D SD 2. compare exceptional with normal pupils

SA A U D SD 3. prepare written reports using standard English

SA A U D SD 4. use techniques which facilitate effective communications

SA A U D SD 5. solve problems in an effective manner

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

SA A U D SD 6. relate to pupils in a manner suggestive of emotional stability

SA A U D SD 7. display self-confidence in working with pupils

SA A U D SD 8. model enthusiasm which motivates exceptional pupils to learn

SA A U D SD 9. empathize with exceptional pupils

SA A U D SD 10. inspire exceptional pupils to realize their capabilities

---

CURRICULUM

SA A U D SD 11. implement mandated curriculum requirements

SA A U D SD 12. use evaluative criteria for selecting educational materials

SA A U D SD 13. organize restoration activities for exceptional pupils

SA A U D SD 14. use community resources for enriching the curriculum

SA A U D SD 15. derive curricular content which meets the needs of exceptional pupils

---

METHODOLOGY

SA A U D SD 16. employ diagnostic and prescriptive teaching strategies

SA A U D SD 17. apply techniques to successfully manage a classroom of exceptional pupils

SA A U D SD 18. demonstrate the effective use of instructional resources

SA A U D SD 19. individualize instruction for exceptional pupils

SA A U D SD 20. apply behavior modification techniques in a humanistic manner

COMMUNITY

SA A U D SD 21. engender community support for programs in special education

SA A U D SD 22. enhance the work of the school by being involved with the community

SA A U D SD 23. provide consultation services to community agencies

SA A U D SD 24. plan for the effective utilization of community resources

SA A U D SD 25. serve as an advocate for exceptional persons with the community

---

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

SA A U D SD 26. participate in activities which promote professional development

SA A U D SD 27. identify experiences useful for achieving professional growth

SA A U D SD 28. implement new procedures on an experimental basis

SA A U D SD 29. participate in research projects

SA A U D SD 30. resourcefully apply new concepts of teaching

LEGAL MANDATES

SA A U D SD 31. develop strategies which facilitate parent cooperation

SA A U D SD 32. contribute to effective team operation

SA A U D SD 33. write IEP's which meet all legal requirements

SA A U D SD 34. implement IEP's for all exceptional pupils

SA A U D SD 35. employ techniques which foster effective mainstreaming of exceptional pupils

_____

Signature

_____

Address

Appendix C

Appendix C

Mean Ratings of Competencies Demonstrated By Successful First Year Special Education Teachers as Perceived by Directors of Special Education (N=27)

Competency[a]	X	SD	RANK
Emotionally Stable (C-6)	1.296	.542	1
Effective Team Member (C-32)	1.407	.694	2
Implement IEP's (C-34)	1.407	.747	3
Individualize Instruction (C-19)	1.407	.844	4
Self Confidence (C-7)	1.444	.698	5
Enthusiastic Role Model (C-8)	1.444	.751	6.5
Manage the Classroom (C-17)	1.444	.751	6.5
Communicate Effectively (C-4)	1.481	.700	8
Inspire Pupils (C-10)	1.500	.707	9
Promote Professional Development (C-26)	1.519	.509	10
Write IEP's (C-33)	1.519	.893	11
Mainstream Pupils (C-35)	1.556	.801	12
Diagnose and Prescribe (C-16)	1.556	.847	13
Develop Curriculum (C-15)	1.593	.747	14
Solve Problem (C-5)	1.630	.742	15.5
Use Instructional Resources (C-18)	1.630	.742	15.5
Prepare Written Reports (C-3)	1.667	.679	17.5
Facilitate Parent Cooperation (C-31)	1.667	.679	17.5
Apply New Concepts (C-30)	1.704	.669	19
Achieve Professional Growth (C-27)	1.741	.447	20
Implement Requirements (C-11)	1.741	.813	21
Organize Restorative Activities (C-13)	1.808	.801	22.5
Use Behavior Modification (C-20)	1.808	.801	22.5
Recognize Characteristics (C-1)	1.889	.751	24
Compare Exceptional Children (C-2)	1.923	.744	25.5
Empathetic (C-9)	1.923	.744	25.5
Evaluate Materials (C-12)	1.926	.874	27
Enrich Curriculum (C-14)	2.000	.832	28
Experiment (C-28)	2.111	.698	29
Engender Community Support (C-21)	2.444	.847	30
Utilize Community Resources (C-24)	2.444	.892	31
Community Involvement (C-22)	2.444	.974	32
Advocate for Exceptional Pupils (C-25)	2.556	.801	33
Participate in Research (C-29)	2.630	.792	34
Consultant to Community Agencies (C-23)	2.963	.980	35

[a]All competencies are abbreviated from longer versions included on the survey instrument

Appendix D

Appendix D

Mean Rating of Competencies Possessed by First Year Special Education Teachers as Perceived by the Graduates

(N=156)

Competency[a]	$\bar{X}$	SD	RANK
Emotionally Stable (C-6)	1.353	.518	1
Self Confidence (C-7)	1.378	.594	2
Enthusiastic Role Model (C-8)	1.423	.623	3
Prepare Written Reports (C-3)	1.458	.647	4
Individualize Instruction (C-19)	1.468	.628	5
Empathetic (C-9)	1.503	.687	6
Achieve Professional Growth (C-27)	1.560	.670	7
Inspire Pupils (C-10)	1.572	.706	8
Use Behavior Modification (C-20)	1.641	.795	9
Communicate Effectively (C-4)	1.665	.595	10
Compare Exceptional Children (C-2)	1.671	.823	11
Promote Professional Development (C-26)	1.680	.717	12
Experiment (C-28)	1.695	.748	13
Effective Team Member (C-32)	1.696	.762	14
Manage the Classroom (C-17)	1.699	.704	15
Solve Problem (C-5)	1.724	.618	16
Develop Curriculum (C-15)	1.748	.752	17
Implement IEP's (C-34)	1.784	.980	18
Use Instructional Resources (C-18)	1.787	.684	19
Write IEP's (C-33)	1.816	1.110	20
Facilitate Parent Cooperation (C-31)	1.846	.844	21
Apply New Concepts (C-30)	1.854	.795	22
Implement Requirements (C-11)	1.859	.774	23
Diagnose and Prescribe (C-16)	1.865	.843	24
Mainstream Pupils (C-35)	1.887	.952	25
Recognize Characteristics (C-1)	2.071	.843	26
Evaluate Materials (C-12)	2.084	.897	27
Advocate for Exceptional Pupils (C-25)	2.147	.958	28
Organize Restorative Activities (C-13)	2.187	.844	29
Enrich Curriculum (C-14)	2.266	.984	30
Participate in Research (C-29)	2.440	1.020	31
Community Involvement (C-22)	2.473	.936	32
Utilize Community Resources (C-24)	2.510	.927	33
Engender Community Support (C-21)	2.678	.960	34
Consultant to Community Agencies (C-23)	2.718	1.034	35

[a]All competencies are abbreviated from longer version included in the survey instrument.

Reference Notes

1. Berner, R.A. Employer ratings of the competency of first year special education teachers from slippery rock state college for the period may 1969 to august 1975. Unpublished manuscript, Slippery Rock State College, 1976.

2. SRSC. The teacher preparation program for the comprehensive special education certificate in the area of mentally and/or physically handicapped (MR, PH, ED, LD, and BI). Unpublished manuscript, Department of Special Education, Slippery Rock State College, 1976.

References

Nie, N.H., Hull, C.H., Jenkins, J.G., Steinbrenner, K. and Bent, D.H. Statistical package for the social sciences. (2nd ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.